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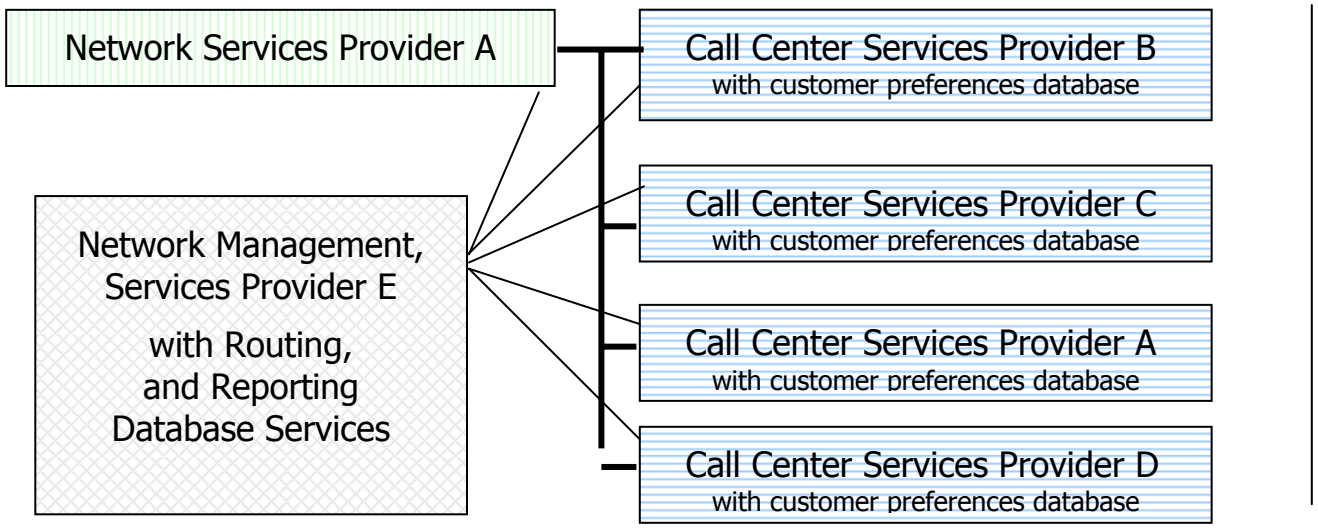
SECTION 4
PROPOSED SERVICES[1]

4.1. SERVICE COMPONENTS

It is the intent of the DDTP to no longer require CRS providers to offer both network services and call center relay services. The DDTP wishes to distribute service loads into three separately bid components. Operating together these separately bid and awarded service components will comprise the California Relay Service. The desired effect will be to place the operational elements of CRS with the responding organizations most qualified in each operational element. For example, the DDTP will no longer require companies whose expertise is the provision of network services to establish call centers or hire and train relay agents. The three separately bid service components, which are included in this RFP, are:

1. Toll-free and Outbound **Network Services** (NS)
2. **Call Center Services** (CCS)
3. **Network Management Services** (NMS)

It is the intent of the DDTP that only one bidder will be awarded the network services (NS), while not more than four (4) bidders will be selected to provide the CRS call center services (CCS). The third operational component, network management services (NMS), will be awarded to a single bidder, who may not be awarded either NS or CCS components.



It is the intent of the DDTP that bidders may offer toll-free and network services, as well as CRS call center services. However, each of these two operational

[1] Portions of this section are taken from ATIS/NIIF-0008, Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) – Technical Needs, available at www.atis.org (see RFP Section 3.2.)

components must be offered separately and independently of one another. If awarded, separate contracts will be issued for each component as an outsourced service. Each contractor shall be fully responsible for their performance, and that of their subcontractors and suppliers that provide any portion of CRS. (See RFP section 5.4.)

4.2. CALL FLOW

There will be many different possible combinations of call types, such as TTY to voice, ASCII to voice, voice to VRS, etcetera. Of these many possibilities, three possible CRS call flow scenarios are illustrated below.

In illustration 4.1, a TTY caller uses CRS to call and talk to a voice user. The TTY caller first places an inbound 800 (toll-free) call to the relay center. The call originates at a TTY connected to a Local Exchange Company (LEC) central office. The call is then routed via the public switched network to the Network Service Provider's (NSP) nearest point of presence. The Network Management System (NMS) actively monitors the status of the NSP's network. When the call reaches the NSP's network, the NS sends a route request to the NMS. Using the originating telephone number (ANI) as the reference point, the NMS looks in its 711 routing database to ascertain instructions for routing the call. The NMS instructs the NSP's network to route the call to the TTY circuit address for Call Center "C" which it does. Note that the call never travels to the NMS. The NMS only provides routing instructions to the NSP. When the call is delivered to the Call Center the CCS vendor checks its customer preference database (also called caller profile database) for call setup and handling preferences. When the Call Centers' Communications Assistant (CA or relay agent) receives the call, the CA obtains from the caller the number that the caller wants to reach. The CA then places a separate simultaneous outbound call. If the CCS database did not instruct the CA to place the outbound call over a specific carrier and there was no such request from the caller, the call is placed to the called party via a carrier of the CCS's choice, in ed as the NSP. When the call is answered the CA an the call and begins to relay the conver tween the TTY cal d th user.

CRS illustration

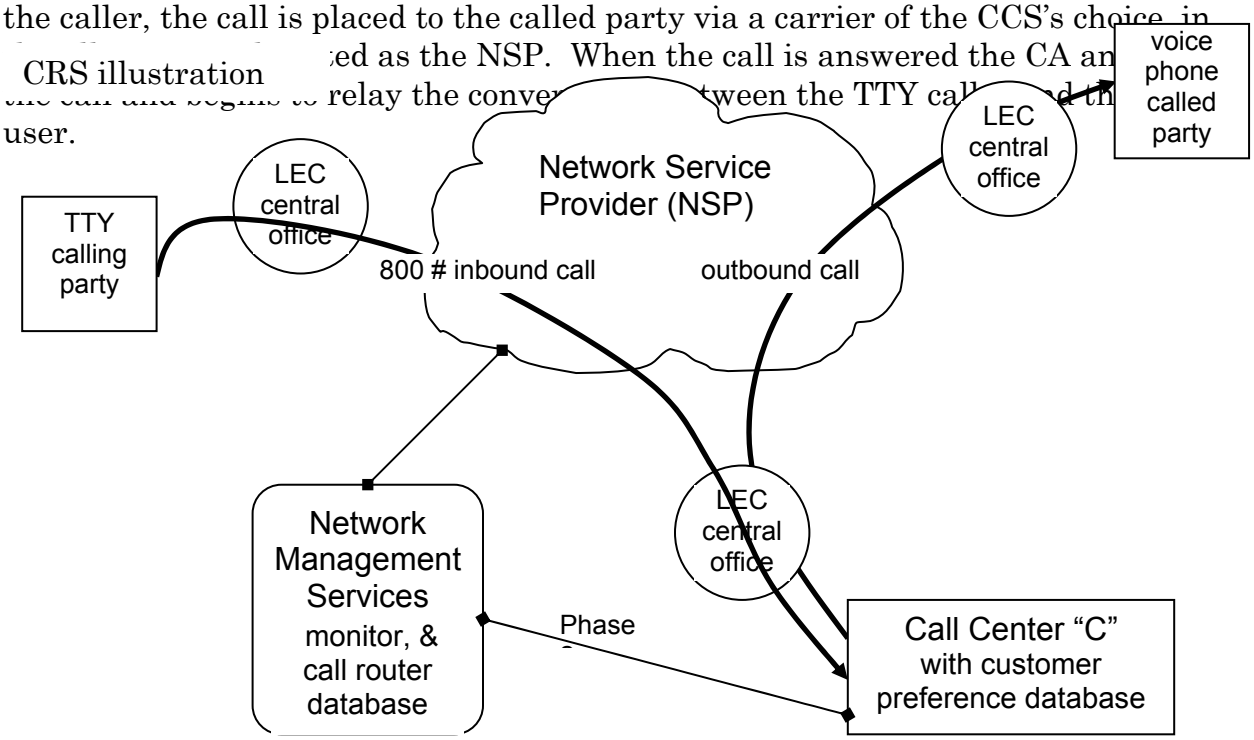
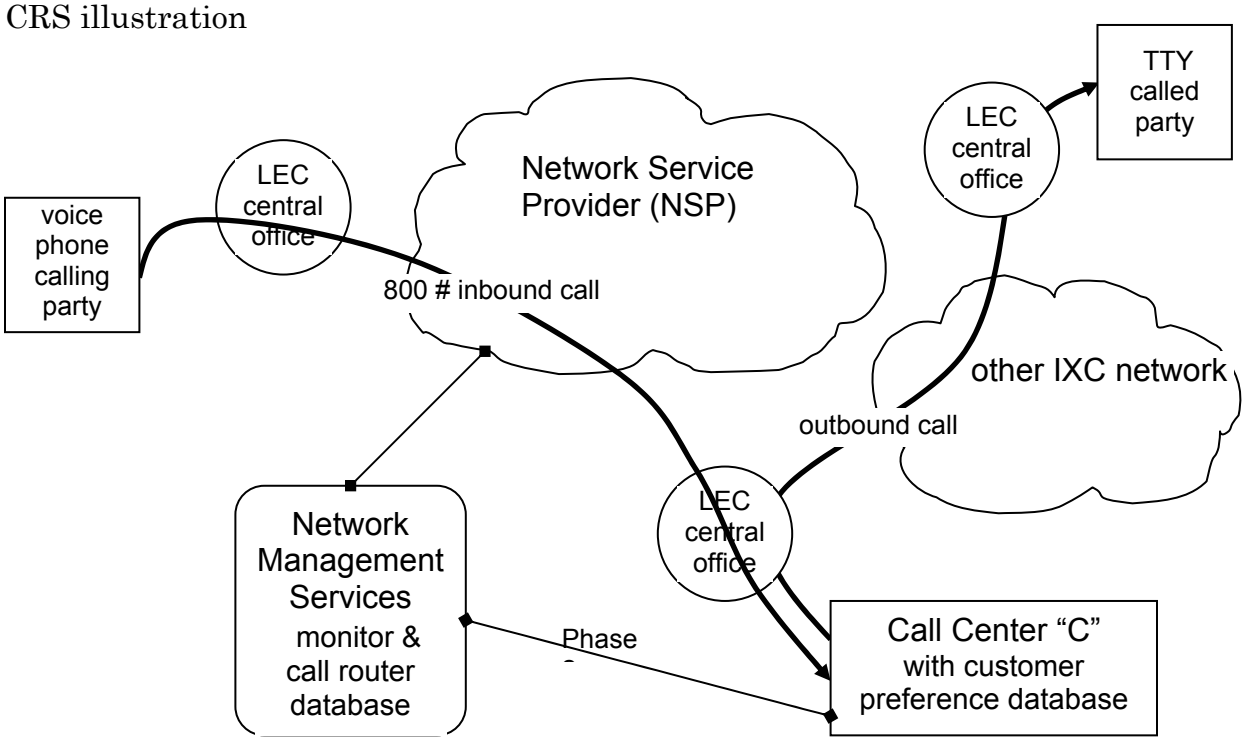


Illustration 4.2 is similar to 4.1 except the call originates from a voice user and is directed to a TTY user, and a different outbound long distance carrier is used. The call is routed to the Call Center in the same manner as in the first illustration except that the call is directed to a voice port at the Call Center. However, in this scenario since the called party is a TTY, the CCS initiates an inquiry to its customer preference database to determine if the called number has special relay call handling preferences such as hearing carry over (HCO) or voice carry over (VCO). In addition, in this scenario the caller has specified, either in the CCS vendor's customer database or as a direct request to the CA, that they want the outbound call to be placed over an inter-exchange carrier (IXC) other than the CRS NSP. The Call Center CA acquires a circuit associated with the desired IXC and continues to process the call. When answered, the CA announces the call and begins to relay the conversation between the TTY caller and the voice user.

CRS illustration

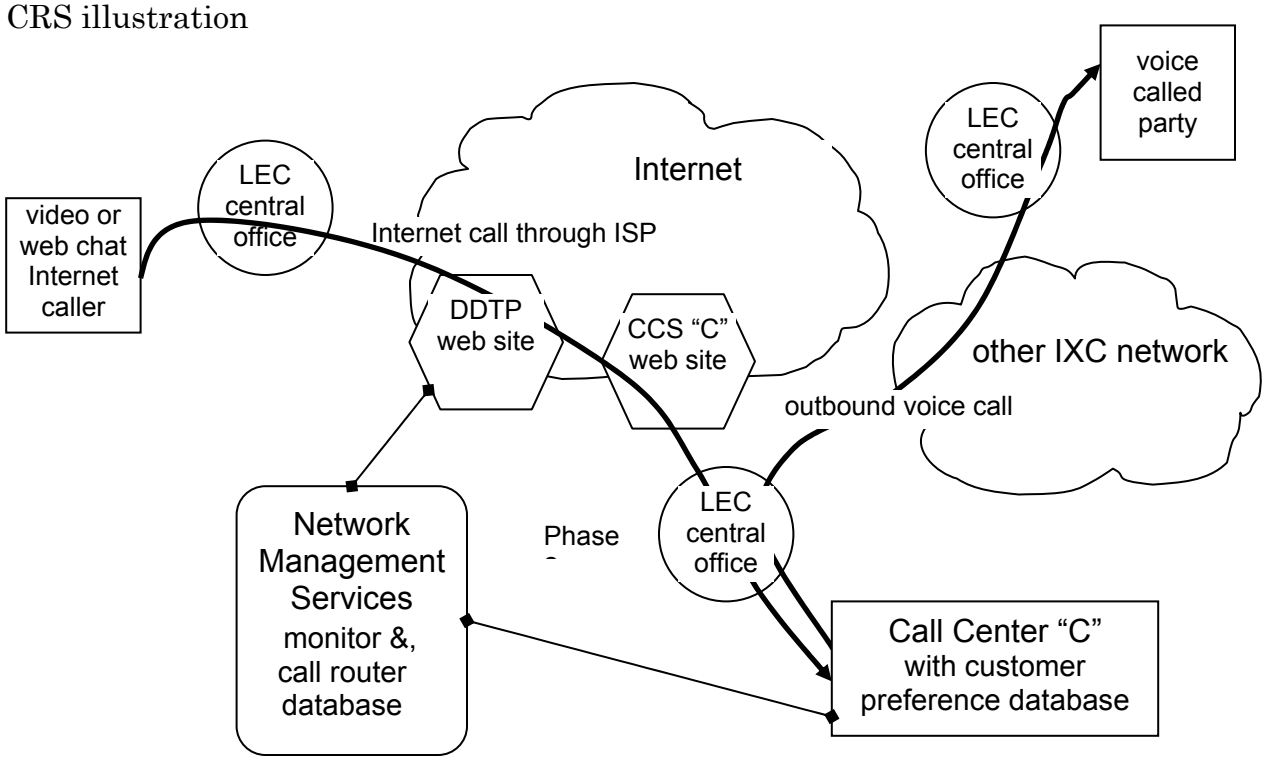


The third illustration, 4.3. below, depicts a caller using the Internet to place a desktop video or web chat CRS call to a call center for relay to a voice called party. In this scenario, the call is placed through the local LEC to the caller's Internet Service Provider (ISP) and then via the Internet to the DDTP's web site. These calls are routed via instructions from the NMS to a CCS provider's web site and from there to the CCS providers' video relay or web chat relay equipped platform.

On a video relay call, the CCS agent converses with the caller in ASL, signed or oral transliteration, and establishes

and relays with the outbound called party in voice. Note that the FCC has presently authorized payment from interstate TRS funds to qualified relay providers for FCC compliant VRS and IP-based relay services (e.g., ISDN and IP video, Web chat). When individual states including California become responsible for payment directly to the CCS Providers for the VRS and WCR, all inbound Internet CRS calls may be required to go to the DDTP's web site to receive further routing instructions. As this possibility is not anticipated until well after the CRS RFP award and implementation, the DDTP's decision whether or not to invoke this requirement will in part be dependent upon the status of Federal and California mandates, CRS vendor capabilities, and CRS user conventions at the time. See RFP Sections 6.3.27.(4.) and 6.3.28.(2.)

CRS illustration



4.3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

4.3.1. Carrier of Choice

The regulation prescribing equal access for TRS has been interpreted to require that the TRS provider offer the TRS user the ability to designate the carrier to transport the outbound call. Accordingly, the TRS provider must establish the technical capability and the administrative procedures to route the call to the designated transport carrier. Similarly, the transport carrier must be able to recognize the TRS call, complete the call to its destination, and obtain sufficient call detail information to accurately rate and bill the

call. With such an arrangement, the established connection will link the calling party to the called party, through the CCS CRS platform and the facilities of the transport carrier. The Communications Assistant (CA) of the CCS provider will provide the relay function.

4.3.2. Rating of TRS Calls

At this time the CPUC has not mandated that TRS calls be discounted by the carrier involved in carrying and billing the outbound call. However, if the CPUC does order discounting, all carriers involved in transporting CRS calls must provide such discounts. Accordingly, if a call is routed by the CRS CCS provider to an outbound transport carrier, the transport carrier must be able to identify the call as a TRS call in order that the appropriate discount can be applied.

4.3.3. Efficiency

It is desirable that the CRS CCS provider be able to route the call to the designated outbound transport carrier in as efficient a manner as possible. The need for such efficiency implies that the transport carrier receive, through available network signaling, all necessary information to complete the call. This information includes the identification of the call as a TRS call, the end user calling number, and the called number. Moreover, it is desirable that any additional information further describing the nature of the calling line (e.g., hotel/motel, payphone, etc.) be provided.

Calls not requiring operator assistance should be routed to the transport carrier's non-operator switch. That is, calls where alternate billing (card, collect, third party) is not requested by the calling party should not involve the operator services position of the transport carrier. When alternate billing is requested, the interaction between the CA and the transport carrier operator should be kept to a minimum. Again, as much information as possible should be provided to the operator services position of the transport carrier through network signaling.

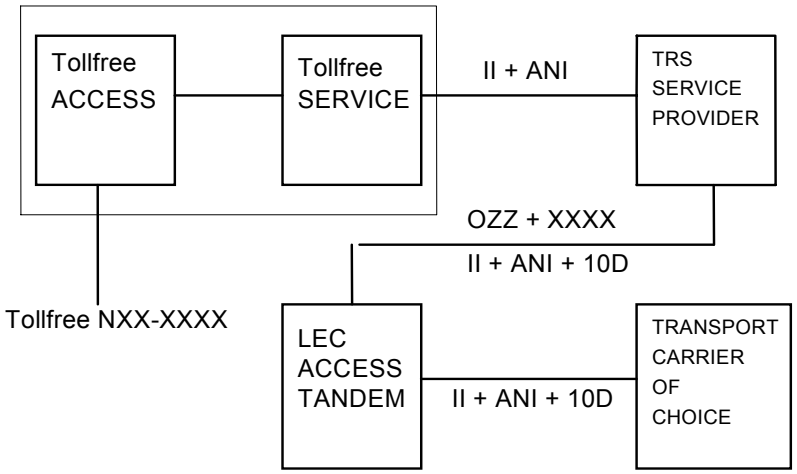
Efficient provision of routing to the outbound transport carrier will minimize the call set-up time associated with the TRS call. Minimal call set-up is necessary to better meet the requirement of functional equivalency to non-TRS connections.

4.4. NETWORK ARCHITECTURE

4.4.1. General

The suggested network architecture to effect carrier of choice is shown in the figure below. A key feature of the architecture is the capability within the CCS provider's CRS platform, which allows the platform to outpulse in an equal-access signaling format to a LEC access tandem switch. This

capability takes advantage of known access network capabilities and arrangements to effectively provide connectivity to the requested outbound transport carrier.



NETWORK ARCHITECTURE FOR CARRIER OF CHOICE

It is understood that it may not be possible to use this network architecture for certain calls (see Section 4.4.16. and 4.4.17.)

4.4.2. Access to the CCS CRS Platform

Connection of the end user (calling party) to the CCS CRS platform through a toll-free number or through 7-1-1 will be required to deliver to the CRS CCS provider the 10 digit calling number (ANI). In addition to the calling party number, the toll-free service should deliver to the CCS platform the ANI II digit pair associated with the calling line.

4.4.3. Selection of Carrier of Choice

After connection to the CCS CRS platform, the end user will provide to the CA -- either verbally or through use of a TTY, or through caller profile data -- the called number, the type alternate billing required, if any, and, if desired, the carrier the caller wishes to route the call.

4.4.4. The Use of Feature Group D Signaling

The CCS CRS platform will route the call to the requested carrier by generating an equal access (FG D) signaling message to an appropriate, originating LEC access tandem switch. Originating FG D signaling through an access tandem uses a two stage outpulsing sequence with the first stage of the form "OZZ XXXX" where OZZ is used to specify a particular trunk group and XXXX is the carrier code. The calling number (ANI) including the ANI II digits and the called number are provided in the second stage of outpulsing.

4.4.5. The Use of Unique II Digit Pairs

It is necessary that the carrier of choice (the outbound transport carrier) recognize the call incoming to its network as a TRS call. To effect this recognition through network signaling, new ANI II digit pairs must be defined and assigned to identify TRS calls. Because the outbound transport carrier requires information regarding the nature of the calling line, reflecting, for example, the need for a particular billing treatment, multiple II digit pairs are necessary. Accordingly, the use of these new II digit pairs will identify the incoming call as a TRS call with no billing restrictions (i.e., bill to the calling number) or a TRS call in which some alternate billing arrangement must be used. Specific definitions of these new ANI II digit pairs are given in Section 4.4.8., below.

It should be recognized that the II digit pair sent by the CCS CRS platform to the carrier of choice will not be the II digit pair originally associated with the calling line and initially received by the CRS platform. Rather, the CRS platform must map the II pair of the calling party's line to one of the new II digit pairs assigned for TRS use.

4.4.6. Call Flow of a CRS Call Billed to the Calling Line

Consider a CRS call made from a residence line where the caller wishes to have the call completed over a specific carrier's network, (and not the network of the CCS CRS provider.) Moreover, the call is to be billed to the calling line.

Typically, the calling party would access the CCS CRS platform by dialing a toll-free number. The call would be completed and, because of the manner in which the toll-free service was provisioned, the CRS platform would receive the calling party number (ANI) and the associated II digits (in this case 00). The calling party will communicate with the CA, informing the CA of the called number and the choice of carrier. The CA, recognizing (through the II digits) that call is made from an unrestricted line and that no alternate billing (e.g., card, collect) has been requested (either directly or via the caller profile information) would assume that the call is to billed to the originating line.

The CA would initiate the call to the designated carrier causing an equal access signaling message to be transmitted from the CCS CRS platform to the appropriate LEC access tandem switch. Contained within the signaling message is the information indicating the carrier to which the call should be routed. The second stage of the signaling message contains both calling and

called party number, including the new II digits 60 indicating that the call is a TRS call and that there are no billing restrictions on the calling line. The call would be completed by the outbound transport carrier with the necessary call detail indicating the use of TRS, thereby permitting the transport carrier to apply the appropriate rate treatment and customer (caller) billing.

4.4.7. Call Flow of a CRS Call with Alternate Billing

A call shall be designated as an alternate billed call either because the calling party has requested such treatment (either directly or through their caller profile data) or the CA, based on an indication from the calling line II digits, recognizes that the call cannot be treated as sent paid. In either event, the call would reach the CCS CRS platform as previously described in Section 4.4.6. The CA, after determining that alternate billing is required, will initiate the call to the specified carrier as if the call were dialed 0+. Carrier identification will again be realized through the first stage of FG D signaling through a LEC access tandem. The calling party number information will contain the necessary II digit pair indicating a TRS call from either a restricted or unrestricted line. Because the call was dialed 0+, the call will be routed to the operator services position of the designated carrier where the appropriate call treatment (card, collect, third party) can be provided.

4.4.8. New ANI II Digit Pairs for TRS

Three new II digit pairs shall be used by the CCS CRS provider and the carriers available to handle its outbound calls to permit the efficient implementation of CRS and, in particular, carrier of choice:

(1.) TRS II Digit Pair 60

ANI II digit pair 60 indicates that the associated call is a TRS call delivered to a outbound transport carrier from a CCS CRS provider and that the call originated from an unrestricted line (i.e., a line for which there are no billing restrictions). Accordingly, if no request for alternate billing is made, the call will be billed to the calling line.

(2.) TRS II Digit Pair 67

ANI II digit pair 67 indicates that the associated call is a TRS call delivered to a outbound transport carrier from a CCS CRS provider and that the call originated from a restricted line. Accordingly, sent paid calls should not be allowed and additional screening, if

available, should be performed to determine the specific restrictions and type alternate billing permitted.

(3.) TRS II Digit Pair 66

ANI II digit pair 66 indicates that the associated call is a TRS call delivered to a outbound transport carrier from a CCS CRS provider, and that the call originates from a hotel/motel. The transport carrier can use this indication, along with other information (e.g., whether the call was dialed 1+ or 0+) to determine the appropriate billing arrangement (i.e., bill to room or alternate bill).

4.4.9. ANI II Digit Mapping

ANI II digit pairs associated with the calling line and received by the CCS CRS platform will have to be mapped into the three II pairs assigned for TRS (60, 66, 67.) The following table suggests such a mapping.[2]

ORIGINAL II PAIR	DESCRIPTION	TRS II PAIR	DESCRIPTION
00	UNRESTRICTED	60	UNRESTRICTED
01	MULTIPARTY	60	UNRESTRICTED
02	ANI FAILURE	67	RESTRICTED[3]
06	HOTEL/MOTEL	66	HOTEL/MOTEL
07	SPECIAL OPERATOR HANDLING	67	RESTRICTED
20	AIOD	60	UNRESTRICTED
23	COIN / NON-COIN UNKNOWN	67	RESTRICTED
24	TOLL-FREE SERVICE	67	RESTRICTED
25	TOLL-FREE	67	RESTRICTED

[2] The table reflects current ANI II digit assignments. When new ANI II digit assignments are made, the mappings and this table will be expanded accordingly.

[3] Typically, when ANI failure occurs, the call is directed to an operator for collection of the calling party number. If the calling party number is successfully obtained, and if it is determined that the calling line is unrestricted, the call may be forwarded from the TRS platform as an unrestricted call (i.e., with ANI II AA).

27	COIN	67	RESTRICTED
29	PRISON / INMATE	67	RESTRICTED
61	CELLULAR	67	RESTRICTED
62	CELLULAR	67	RESTRICTED
63	CELLULAR	67	RESTRICTED
70	COCOT	67	RESTRICTED
93	VIRTUAL NET	60	UNRESTRICTED

4.4.10. Capabilities of the CCS CRS Provider

As indicated in the above call flows, the CCS CRS platform and/or the CA must provide several specific capabilities in order to effect the desired call processing:

- Receive the ANI of the calling line.
- Receive and interpret the ANI II digits of the calling line.
- Recognize the routing needs (e.g., 1+, 0+) of the calling party.
- Map the calling line II digits to the TRS II digits as appropriate.
- Route the call to the carrier of choice using FG D signaling through a LEC access tandem switch. (Access facilities to connect the CCS CRS platform to the appropriate access tandem must be provided by the CCS provider and be in place.)
- Provide all necessary additional information to the carrier of choice (e.g., card number, collect, third party.)

In addition, it is the responsibility of the CCS CRS provider to inform all IXCs operating in a given state (where the TRS provider offers service) of the location of specific access tandem switches through which "carrier of choice" traffic will be distributed. Moreover, the TRS provider is also responsible for informing the industry relative to the activation by the TRS provider of any newly assigned ANI II digit pairs which will necessarily be forwarded to a selected carrier of choice.

The designated architecture for carrier of choice requires that the CCS CRS provider route traffic through a LEC access tandem switch for delivery to the end user's chosen carrier. Accordingly, the CCS provider must insure that access facilities are made available by the LEC to provide the necessary connectivity from the CCS CRS platform to the designated access tandem.

In addition, the CCS provider must ensure that access recording capability be available at the tandem switch which receives traffic from the CCS CRS provider and routes that traffic to the outbound transport carrier.

4.4.11. Capabilities of the Transport Carrier

Similarly, the transport carrier must also support several features to allow the efficient implementation of carrier of choice:

- Provision access facilities from the appropriate access tandems.
- Receive FG D signaling at all POPs designated to collect TRS traffic.
- Receive and recognize the unique TRS II digits.
- Record the necessary call detail information for rating and billing.

4.4.12. Trunking to the LEC Access Tandem Switch

The previously described call flows indicate that the CCS CRS provider will deliver traffic to the designated carrier of choice through a LEC access tandem switch. Because the CCS CRS platform may be physically distant from the state it serves (California), an issue that must be addressed is the location of the LEC access tandem to which the TRS platform will deliver carrier of choice traffic. It is possible that such traffic could be offered at a tandem switch and delivered to the designated carrier outside the state in which the call was made.

If this were the case, at least two difficulties might arise. First, the information provided to the outbound transport carrier necessarily includes the calling party number, which indicate the NPA code associated with the originating location. Accordingly, if this call is delivered to a Point of Presence (POP), and ultimately to a switch of the outbound transport carrier in a state far distant from the location of the calling party, that switch will receive and must recognize "foreign" NPA codes which it typically is not expecting. Therefore, the CCS CRS provider must either assure that screening in these switches, at least on those trunk groups that receive CRS calls, will have to allow such "foreign" codes, or the CCS CRS provider must be connected to the LEC switch or switches serving the state.

Second, the ANI based screening required to determine specific call treatment (e.g., collect only) or to validate 1+ calling from hotels is based upon internal databases which are regionally deployed. Accordingly, if the call is delivered to the outbound transport carrier at a location distant from the calling party, the relevant information necessary to perform screening may not be present.

It is therefore required that routing arrangements be considered so that calls routed from the CCS CRS provider to the designated carrier of choice are delivered to that carrier from a LEC access tandem switch in the state from which the call originated, preferably from the switch that serves the calling NPA.

4.4.13. Toll-free Database Access

There are two situations where toll-free database access will provide to the CCS CRS platform an ANI II digit pair which does not directly describe the characteristic of the originating line, or will change the II pair associated with the calling line. II 23 will be received by the CCS CRS platform if the access provider cannot determine if the originating line is coin or non-coin. Receipt of II 23 will occur, for example, on some calls originating from non-equal access end offices.

Upon receipt of II 23 the CA shall attempt to obtain the full (10 digit) ANI of the calling party and the nature of the calling line. If the CA determines that the call can be billed to the calling line, the ANI II digit pair forwarded to the outbound transport carrier could be that associated with a TRS unrestricted call. If the CA is not certain of the nature of the calling line, or is unwilling to take responsibility for that decision, the call should be forwarded to the transport carrier with the ANI II digit pair for a TRS restricted call.

ANI II digit pair 24 is used to indicate that toll-free access includes a POTS number translation and will therefore be received by the CCS CRS platform on every call if the toll-free service provider has selected this option from the toll-free access supplier. If II 24 is received, the CA should again attempt to determine the nature of the calling line. The DDTP shall request of its toll-free (NS) service provider that POTS translation not be used.

4.4.14. Inaccessibility of the Designated Carrier

Clearly, the designated outbound transport carrier of choice to which the CCS CRS provider will direct the call must have a Point of Presence (POP) in the area from which the call originates in order to effect functional equivalency, and must have in place access facilities from the tandem switch to which the CCS CRS provider routes the call. If such access facilities are not in place, the call cannot be directed to the transport carrier and should be routed to the appropriate announcement.

It should be noted that announcement capability may not be available at all LEC tandem switches that will receive TRS (carrier of choice) traffic, possibly

causing calls routed to unavailable carriers to terminate in reorder, without explanation to the calling party. Accordingly, the CCS CRS provider will need to be aware of the IXCs that serve California (or areas within the state) and are available to receive TRS traffic. Calling parties selecting a carrier known to the CCS CRS provider to be unavailable from the caller's area shall be so informed by the CCS CRS provider and asked to make another choice.

4.4.15. Access to the LEC Operator

Situations may arise in which a calling party making a CRS call needs to access the LEC operator for assistance. Accordingly, the CCS CRS provider's platform should incorporate and support existing interconnection arrangements (e.g., operator inward dialing) and procedures to accommodate this potential need.

4.4.16. Transfer of CRS IntraLATA Calls to the LEC

As previously explained (Section 4.4.1.) there may be situations where, subject to regulatory directives, intraLATA calls handled by a TRS provider must be routed to the LEC for completion. The network solution described herein may not be able to be used for such calls. Alternatively, intraLATA calls could be forwarded to the LEC simply by sending the called number to the LEC tandem or end office switch. (If calls are routed by the CCS CRS provider to the LEC for completion, the calls may have to be delivered to a tandem switch in the LATA in which the call originated.) Associated billing arrangements, if required, therefore may have to be accommodated on an individual case basis. In any event, should LEC completion of intraLATA CRS calls be required the arrangements necessary to accommodate this need must be developed by the CCS CRS provider through one-on-one negotiations between the CCS CRS provider and the LEC.

4.4.17. Coin Sent-Paid Calls

Although FCC Order (CC Docket 90-571) ruled that TRS must accommodate coin sent-paid calls, this order remains stayed pending development of an acceptable technological solution. Current TRS access arrangements (i.e. toll-free service) and TRS platform

capabilities cannot adequately support coin sent-paid traffic as the necessary coin control signaling features, required to monitor the deposit and collection of coins, are not available.[4] Moreover, the difficulties are compounded if the call is handed off from the TRS provider to a transport carrier. In this situation, the coin control capabilities would necessarily have to be transferred to the transport carrier -- a capability that again, is not available.

Further, full support of coin sent paid TRS traffic would require a non-voice interface for coin control signaling and the development of the associated industry standards. In addition, changes in customer premises equipment (i.e., coin telephones) would be required to support TTY usage on coin calls.

In recognition of these difficulties, the FCC, on March 16, 2001, issued its Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC-01-89, concerning TRS payphone requirements, which continues the suspension of coin sent-paid but requires that TRS providers accept alternative billing arrangements (credit card, etc) from payphones. Bidders are advised that the FCC proposal is an ongoing process, and should obtain a full copy of FCC-01-89, available from the FCC web site, www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/trs.html.

4.5. ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS

A CCS CRS provider (with associated outbound transport carrier and LEC), may choose not to implement the above described capabilities (section 4.4. et seq.) Although less efficient, there are alternatives to the network solution which could provide the basic carrier of choice feature. Any deviation from the above described capabilities must be fully detailed in the bidder's Conceptual, Draft and Final proposals.

Simplistically, upon a calling party request for outbound transport service from a designated carrier, the CCS CRS provider could launch the call to that carrier using 101XXXX access. The call would be routed to the carrier of choice with the ANI and the ANI II digits of the CCS CRS platform. The outbound transport carrier could identify calls from a TRS provider based upon the ANI, and collect the call detail for those calls in a "downstream" process. Call detail information, recorded by the CCS CRS provider, including calling party number could then be provided to the outbound transport carrier, allowing calls completed over the transport carrier's network to be associated with the appropriate calling party. Accordingly, the calls could be rated and billed.

[4] The use of 711 dialing for TRS access, although eliminating the inherent incompatibilities associated with coin sent paid and toll-free service, would not, in and of itself, allow the easy implementation of coin sent-paid traffic for TRS.

This arrangement would permit a CCS CRS provider to route the call to the calling party's carrier of choice, and would not require the network modifications and access trunking additions described in Section 4.4. This arrangement, however, requires the transfer of billing information outside the normal, automated processes. The use of essentially manual input to an otherwise

automated process is administratively burdensome and is prone to result in lost data and/or errors. Moreover, the absence of relevant information (e.g., calling party number, relevant II digits) in real time during call processing could inhibit the outbound transport carrier's ability to properly treat the call, and could potentially increase the possibility of fraud. Accordingly, at least for use in the long term, this alternate arrangement is not recommended.

Descriptions of the three separately bid service components follow.

4.6. NETWORK SERVICES

Many TTYs in California are user programmed with the DDTP's existing CRS TTY "800" number. All of the DDTP's CRS 800 numbers will be assigned to the awarded Network Service Provider (NSP). Each relay Call Center vendor's own 800 numbers for CRS calls may either be assigned to the awarded NSP or to a carrier of the CCS Provider's choice, upon approval by the DDTP. The cost for dedicated toll-free traffic over a CCS Provider's own toll-free numbers shall be paid directly by the CCS Provider. The FCC ordered all carriers to implement 711 for TRS access by October 1, 2001. For this RFP, all 711 CRS calls will also be directed to an 800 number carried by the awarded NSP. Thus, with the possible exception of the CCS Providers' dedicated toll-free services, it is anticipated that all CRS inbound 800 number traffic to the CRS call centers will be routed over the NSP's network. However, there is no requirement that inbound relay calls that are placed over the Internet to the CCS vendors shall be carried by the NS provider.

In addition, all outbound CRS telephone traffic not local to the Call Center may be routed over the NSP's network, unless the caller has requested that a different inter-exchange carrier (IXC) be used and that the Call Center that is placing the outbound call has relay enabled interconnection agreements in place with the requested IXC. Caller requests for an IXC may be recorded in a CCS customer preference database or may be made directly to the Call Center CA that receives the inbound call.

The selection of the NSP will be as stipulated in RFP Section 9. Bidders will not be allowed to tie their network services price to their call center offering. Reimbursement to the NSP will be on a per minute basis, paid monthly by the DDTP for completed call traffic. Additional requirements of the NSP are listed below, as well as in RFP Section 6, Technical Requirements.

4.6.1. FCC and CPUC Certified

The NSP must be a common carrier as defined under Section 3(44) of the U.S. Telecommunications Act and must be certified by the FCC and the CPUC as necessary to provide such services to the public for interstate, international, and intrastate interLATA calls.

4.6.2. FCC and CPUC Orders, Rules and Standards

The NSP must continuously meet all applicable FCC and CPUC performance and operational orders, rules and standards. The NSP must comply with all applicable orders, rules and standards throughout the term of their CRS contract, including new and

modified orders, rules and standards that may occur during the term of the contract. Liability and costs for compliance shall not be passed on to the DDTP.

4.6.3. Inbound Call Routing Capability

The NSP must have the capability to route inbound CRS calls to specific CRS Call Centers. Calls placed to a CRS call center provider's own 800 number assigned to the NSP shall be distributed to that call center provider. All other calls shall be distributed to the CRS call centers as instructed by the DDTP.

4.6.4. Outbound Call Transport and Billing

The NSP will be required to receive and carry all outbound intraLATA, interLATA, interstate and international CRS calls that are passed to the NSP by the CCSs at a minimum using the network architecture described in RFP section 4.4. et seq. The CCSs will be required to honor all callers' requested choice of outbound network carrier (through caller preference data or via a direct request of the caller) if at all technically feasible. Otherwise the CCSs will choose which interexchange carrier they will pass the call to, with the NS provider functioning as one of the available carriers; (see additional restrictions of this requirement in RFP Section 6.3.)

The NSP shall bill the caller for the call as if it were an equivalent voice call placed by the caller from the point of origin to the called number, except that all calls of 40 miles or less between the caller's serving central office and the called party's serving central office shall not be billed to the caller (such calls of 40 miles or less shall be free to the caller.) The NSP may invoice callers directly if the caller has an established account with the NSP, or the NSP may invoice callers through the caller's LEC. The NSP is responsible for establishing appropriate billing and data transfer arrangements with the LECs.

4.6.5. Reporting

The NSP shall be required to provide the DDTP, regularly and/or upon request, with a number of reports concerning traffic, performance, and billing as detailed elsewhere in this RFP.

4.6.6. Network Access for Monitoring and Call Routing

The NSP shall be required to agree to provide access to their network for CRS call monitoring and call routing either directly by the DDTP or by a DDTP contractor. Such call monitoring and call routing functionality is described herein as Network Management Services (NMS) described elsewhere in this RFP.

4.6.7. Cooperation

The NSP shall be required to cooperatively work with the other CRS component vendors and with the DDTP to successfully plan and implement services in a manner that will foster overall success of the CRS undertaking.

4.7. CALL CENTER SERVICES

Up to four (4) call center providers may be awarded contracts for CRS Call Center Services (CCS.) CRS CCS providers will be required to receive calls delivered to them from the CRS NSP, assign a Communication Assistant (CA) to answer the call, place an outbound call, and relay the call between the calling and called parties.

It is the intent of the DDTP that organizations not experienced with the provision of relay services not be excluded from bidding. Rather, the DDTP wishes to provide assistance to such vendors through the iterative process of responding to this RFP and, if such firms are awarded contracts, through involvement in their planning, implementation and testing processes as stipulated elsewhere in this RFP. It is the desire of the DDTP that all CRS vendors consider the DDTP as a working partner in the provision of services.

The selection of the CCS vendors will be based on a variety of factors as stipulated in RFP Section 9. The relative amount of inbound CRS calls that has not been designated by the caller to be received by a specific CCS vendor, will be distributed by the NSP to the CCS vendors based on relative ranking of proposal and acceptance testing evaluation points. Periodically thereafter the distribution of such calls may be modified by actual CCS vendor performance as described in RFP Section 10. However, it is the intent of the DDTP to not increase traffic to a provider unless the provider is able to accept that traffic in a manner that will not adversely affect overall CRS quality of service. It is the intent of the DDTP to coordinate increases and decreases in traffic with CCS providers in a manner that will maximize the overall efficacy of the services provided.

Calls placed to a CCS Provider's own dedicated toll-free numbers shall be carried at the CCS provider's direct expense.

The DDTP will reimburse the CCS providers for all California intra-state CRS conversation minutes, except when reimbursement is offered by NECA. It will be the responsibility of the CCS vendor to obtain reimbursement for interstate and international CRS calls from NECA, acting under the authority of the FCC. Additional CCS provider requirements are listed below, as well as in RFP Section 6, Technical Requirements.

4.7.1. FCC and CPUC Orders, Rules and Standards

CCS providers must continuously meet all applicable FCC and CPUC performance and operational orders, rules and standards relative to TRS including those that would otherwise apply to common carriers providing TRS. CCS providers must comply with all such applicable TRS orders, rules and standards throughout the term of their CRS contract, including new and modified TRS orders, rules and standards that may occur during the term of the contract. Liability and costs for compliance shall not be passed on to the DDTP.

4.7.2. Caller Routing and Preference Information

The NMS vendor shall create and maintain a "711 database" of caller specific information used exclusively for routing CRS calls placed via 711 or via one of the DDTP's 800 numbers, to the caller's registered CCS vendor of choice. All CRS call center vendors will be required to collect information submitted by callers for this 711 database whenever callers wish to establish or update their CCS selection information. New and updated 711 records must be transmitted to the DDTP's NMS contractor on a daily basis.

When a relay call is placed through 711 or through an 800 number assigned to the NSP, a 711 database lookup by the NMS provider will attempt to match the Automatic Number Identification (ANI) of the call with callers' phone numbers listed in the NMS's 711 database. If a match is found in the 711 database, the call is routed to the CCS provider of record. If no match is found, the NMS routes the call according to a prearranged formula, as described elsewhere in the RFP. Calls on a Provider's dedicated toll-free numbers shall be routed to the CCS Provider, regardless of a caller's preferences registered within the 711 database.

CCS vendors will develop and maintain their own customer preference databases, to be used exclusively to provide the CCS vendor's platform and CAs with caller's registered call setup instructions and call handling preferences. Each CCS vendor's customer preference database shall be independent of each other, and there shall be no central caller preference or profile database maintained by the DDTP or NMS. Each CRS call center vendor will be required to collect information submitted to them by callers for their CCS customer preference database whenever callers wish to establish or update their call setup and handling preference information. This customer preference information may indicate the caller's choice of outbound carrier as well as various relay operational preferences. Under no circumstances shall CCS vendors be allowed to use such information for marketing or other purposes. All caller preference information shall be considered confidential and will not be allowed to be released to any third party, except for individual caller preference data as required in RFP Section 6.3.23.(6.) in responding to emergency calls, or upon the request of a CRS consumer as required in RFP Section 6.3.36.(5.), or as required by the FCC or CPUC, or as required by a court order.

Using the caller's ANI delivered with the call, the CCS provider shall perform a lookup in its own customer preference database.[5] The CCS provider will also be required to perform a database inquiry of the outbound call number to ascertain if the called number also has customer preference information

[5] Also called "caller profile database."

registered in the CCS providers' database. The CCS provider will be responsible to ensure that the inbound and outbound customer preference information is delivered to the CCS CA for call setup and handling. Inbound caller preferences shall prevail over outbound caller preferences when there is a conflict. To the degree possible, the CCS vendor should implement all preference instructions automatically.

Presently and in the past, very few CRS callers have filled out caller preferences or profiles.[6] Commonly understood reasons have been an unwillingness of callers to release information they consider private, and inadequate outreach and education on the part of the CRS providers and the DDTP. We note however that in the present CRS arrangement the use of caller profile forms has not been in the financial interest of the CRS vendors, as these forms represented an opportunity for callers to instruct the CRS vendor to have their outbound calls carried by a carrier different than the CRS vendor.

However, in the CRS environment envisioned in this RFP, it will be to the CCS vendors' strong financial advantage to promote 711 registration, as the 711 forms will represent an opportunity for the caller to "pre-select" the CCS vendor of choice, thereby automatically directing all of the caller's future CRS calls to the CCS vendor selected. In addition, the 711 form is envisioned to be a standardized form promoted by all CRS vendors as well as by other entities. For example, the standardized form could be made available with all TTYs and other equipment distributed by the DDTP, through audiologists and hearing aid companies, through manufacturers of equipment that serve the deaf and disabled, through agencies serving people who are deaf or disabled, through DDTP outreach specialists, through the DDTP's web site, through associated state and local government agencies and programs, et cetera.

CCS vendor 711 outreach will be an excellent opportunity for CCS vendors to also solicit individual customer preferences to make the call setup and handling process as smooth and efficient as possible for their customer's benefit. Unlike the 711 form, each CCS vendor will be able, with DDTP approval, to design and market their own unique CRS customer preference forms. The DDTP encourages CCS vendors to offer distinctive features in their customer preference choices.

4.7.3. Outbound Call Routing and Billing

If callers have not registered an outbound carrier in their CCS vendor's customer preferences database, or if they do not request a specific outbound carrier at the time of the call, the CCS vendor may route the outbound call via the DDTP's designated NSP or to any relay enabled carrier of the CCS's choice, except that the CCS provider shall not route non-caller designated traffic of 40 miles or less to the NS provider if the CCS provider is a common carrier. It shall be the responsibility of the CCS vendors to make arrangements with the interexchange carriers that will enable those IXCs to

[6] Until the present CRS providers, MCI and Sprint, release their caller profile data to the DDTP, the DDTP has no way of knowing the number of callers who have registered their profiles. It is estimated that fewer than ten percent of CRS callers have registered profiles, perhaps as little as two percent.

carry the CCS's outbound relay calls and to bill the caller for those calls. Such arrangements must include the requirement that the IXC bill the caller for the call as if it were an equivalent voice call placed by the caller from the point of origin to the called number. If the IXC is an affiliate of, or the same firm as, the CCS provider, the IXC shall also ensure that all calls of 40 miles or less between the caller's serving central office and the called party's

serving central office shall not be billed to the caller (such calls of 40 miles or less shall be free to the caller.) The IXC may invoice callers directly if the caller has an established account with the IXC, or the IXC may invoice through the caller's LEC. The IXC is responsible for establishing appropriate billing and data transfer arrangements with the LECs. See section 4.7.5 for additional billing requirements related to VRS and WCR traffic.

Callers with a CCS registered outbound carrier may override that preference with a real-time request to the CA, and are permitted to change their registered carrier preferences at any time. Alteration of a caller's carrier-of-choice selection and of a caller's CCS vendor of choice selection without the caller's authorization (i.e., slamming) will not be permitted and may be grounds for contract termination for cause, liquidated damages, and/or other penalties and fines as imposed by the DDTP or the CPUC. Callers' carrier-of-choice, in addition to being a FCC requirement, is very important to the calling community, and an inability or unwillingness to honor callers' carrier-of-choice will result in callers selecting other CCS providers to handle their relay calls.

4.7.4. Speech-To-Speech Service

All CCS vendors shall be required to provide Speech-To-Speech (STS) relay services. STS offers relay services to people with speech disabilities (between people with speech disabilities, and between people with speech disabilities and people without such disabilities.) In this context speech disability includes people using augmented communications devices. Call center agents that handle STS calls must be specially trained to understand the speech patterns of people with speech disabilities. Conversation between the speech-disabled caller and the relay agent will be by voice. STS service shall be included within the per conversation minute reimbursement rate of basic CRS relay.

4.7.5. New Relay Services

In keeping with California statute and FCC requirements the DDTP encourages CCS providers to offer new and innovative relay technologies and service offerings. Two such required offerings are Internet Web Chat Relay Services (WCR) and Video Relay Services (VRS). These types of innovations are extremely important to the DDTP as they have the potential to greatly expand relay access and services to the deaf community.

For WCR, the CCS provider will be required to permit Internet callers to establish a private interactive web chat between a caller and a call center WCR enabled CA. WorldCom has an existing IP based relay, accessed through www.ip-relay.com.

VRS will permit callers to establish relay calls to the call center CA via video. The anticipated application will be from a user's desktop video to the call center via ISDN and/or Internet using DSL or similar facilities. Conversation between the caller and the CA will be by American Sign Language (ASL), signed or oral transliteration at a minimum of 25 frames per second.

Both VRS and WCR provided by qualified relay providers are currently being reimbursed by NECA under FCC authorization and not billed to the individual states. When any portion of these VRS and WCR costs are assumed by the states for payment directly to the CCS Providers, California's own performance and integration requirements in this RFP shall apply per RFP Sections 6.3.27.(4.) and 6.3.28.(2.)

Unless stipulated otherwise by the FCC, costs for outbound calls originating from VRS and WCR traffic shall be assumed by the CCS Provider and be considered as included in the NECA reimbursement, per RFP Sections 6.3.27.(5.) and 6.3.28.(3.)

The DDTP may become responsible for directly reimbursing for VRS or WCR costs. In order to facilitate NMS reporting and call routing, the DDTP may then require that CRS users access WCR and VRS only through the DDTP's web site or designated URLs.

4.7.6. Other Services Not Included in this RFP

Nothing in this RFP shall preclude CCS providers from offering additional non-relay services to the public, outside the scope of this RFP. Such services may include services of benefit to the deaf and disabled community, such as:

- Remote captioning.
- Remote ASL, signed or oral transliteration interpreting.
- Centralized answering services provided by the CCS.
- Voice to CCS provided TTY message storage (for later retrieval by a TTY user.)
- TTY to CCS provided TTY message storage (for later retrieval by a TTY user.)
- Video to CCS provided TTY message storage (for later retrieval by a TTY user.)
- Voice to CCS provided video message storage (for later retrieval by a video user.)
- TTY to CCS provided video message storage (for later retrieval by a video user.)
- TTY to Email.
- Email to TTY.
- TTY to Paging.[7]
- Paging to TTY.[7]
- Voice to Paging.[7]
- Paging to Voice.[7]

[7] Conversation relayed in real-time through paging is permitted (where both the inbound caller and the outbound called party are concurrently engaged in the call). Delayed paging (the much more prevalent form of paging), i.e. where the message is stored-for later retrieval, is not permitted.

Some of these non-relay services potentially represent tremendous untapped financial and service opportunities on a national scale, perhaps even larger than relay itself. Firms that establish the capabilities in this RFP, especially those related to relay call center services, will find themselves exceptionally well positioned to take advantage of these and other non-relay opportunities.

Non-relay services, such as those listed above, will not be reimbursed by the DDTP. If CCS providers wish reimbursement for such services, they must make arrangements to directly invoice the callers or make other arrangements for reimbursement. NS providers are not obligated to handle the billing for CCS non-relay services.

In the offering and providing of all such non-relay services, the CCS provider shall not use CRS caller specific information without the discrete authorization of the CRS caller as stipulated elsewhere in this RFP. Confidentiality of the CRS callers and their preference information is paramount. Neither shall CCS vendors offer or solicit non-relay services proceeding, during or after a CRS relay call to either the inbound or outbound caller.

4.7.7. Training

All CCS vendors will be required to implement extensive CA training programs to ensure that all CAs are knowledgeable and proficient in relay operations, cultural, deaf and disability awareness.

4.7.8. Reporting

All CCS vendors shall be required to provide the DDTP, regularly and/or upon request, with a number of reports including traffic, performance and complaint resolution as detailed in Section 6 of this RFP.

4.7.9. Call Center Access for Monitoring and Reporting

All CRS CCS vendors shall be required to agree to provide real-time access to their ACDs that process CRS calls for detailed CRS traffic monitoring and reporting purposes directly by the DDTP and/or by a DDTP NMS contractor as described in Section 6 of this RFP. In addition CRS CCS vendors shall provide the DDTP with site access for monitoring or inspection to assure compliance with all contract provisions.

4.7.10. Cooperation

All CCS vendors shall be required to cooperatively work with the other CRS component vendors and with the DDTP to successfully plan and implement services in a manner that will foster overall success of the CRS undertaking, including the NMS implementation which will be divided into two phases. The first phase of the NMS service shall enable the 711 routing to the appropriate CCS vendor, enable the exchange of 711 caller specific data between the NMS and CCS vendors to keep the 711 database current, and also require limited electronic reporting of the CCS Providers' ACD including CRS queue status and traffic. The second NMS implementation phase shall

include the passive integration of the NMS systems with the CCS systems to ensure accurate reporting of the CCS CRS activities and billing.

4.8. NETWORK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Network Management Services (NMS) component will perform the important functions of monitoring CRS calling traffic, maintaining a call routing database, routing calls, and reporting. NMS will be an outsourced service, with the ownership of the data and application configuration retained by the DDTP.

In order to ensure consumers' successful transition to the relay services awarded as a result of this RFP, the services of the NMS Provider shall be deployed in two phases. In summary, the first phase shall include the development and deployment of the database services necessary to direct the NS Provider to transfer callers to the appropriate CCS Provider, the ability for the CCS vendors to provide new and updated information to that database and to query that database for status, and the receipt and processing of limited electronic traffic reporting data from the CCS Providers. The second phase shall encompass the integration of the NMS platform with the CCS systems and the full reporting and auditing of CCS performance as specified RFP Section 6.4.2. Phase 2 is a "mandatory-optional" requirement; that is, bidders must offer the services at a separately priced item from phase 1, and it will be the DDTP's option whether or not to purchase the items associated with phase 2. See RFP Sections 6.1. and 6.4. for specifics regarding the NMS technical bidding and service requirements, and RFP Sections 7.3. and 9.4. for pricing and proposal evaluation information regarding this mandatory-optional phased approach. Due to the FCC's authorization of NECA reimbursement for VRS and IP-based relay, NMS monitoring of CCS vendors' VRS and WCR may not be required during the term of the contracted services as a result of this RFP.

At a minimum, Phase 1 shall include the NMS tasks necessary to:

- integrate with the Network Services Provider's network;
- develop a 711 routing database and integrate with CCS providers for data input and query;
- respond to routing requests from the Network Services Provider and provide the routing instructions necessary for the NSP to direct calls to the appropriate Call Center Providers, based on the 711 database and the formulas periodically provided by the DDTP for unassigned traffic according to the RFP;
- modify the DDTP's website to allow CRS users to easily perform a "blind" transfer of users to their per-call selected call center provider for both Web Chat and Video Relay Services;

- develop 711 database forms for user and CCS provider input, including modifying the DDTP's website to allow CRS users to establish and update their choice of CCS vendor(s); and

- generate summary usage and traffic reports for the DDTP based on the limited information provided by the NS Provider and the various Call Center Services Providers to the NMS Provider.

Phase 2 shall include the NMS tasks necessary to provide the following Call Center Services integration and auditing functionality:

- integrate the NMS platform and peripheral equipment with the Call Center sites in order to accurately provide *auditing* of the California Relay activities within the call centers including but not limited to agent activities and queue status for each relay modality except for VRS and WCR (e.g., TTY, voice, STS, etc.), and the associated CCS billing time based on billable outbound conversation time by inbound relay modality;

- modify the DDTP website as necessary to transfer and audit the Web Chat and Video Relay Services as callers would then be transferred based on their preferences; and

- generate expanded reports for the DDTP based on the enhanced information available as a result of the integration with Call Center Service Providers' systems.

It is anticipated that the NMS monitoring, routing and reporting platform will be a Cisco Intelligent Contact Manager (ICM), or equivalent (e.g., Genesys). For general information about Cisco's ICM see www.cisco.com/warp/public/180/prod_plat/cust_cont/icm/. The selection of the NMS provider will be focused on experience, capabilities and cost as stipulated in RFP Section 9. The awarded NMS provider will not be awarded NS or CCS components. Reimbursement to the NMS will be for delivered ongoing monthly services, paid by the DDTP as a monthly service cost. Additional service requirements of the NMS provider are listed below, as well as in RFP Section 6.4. which provides more specific details regarding which requirements pertain to phase 1 and which pertain to phase 2.

4.8.1. Real-time Monitoring *[phase 2]*

The NMS will have data links to the NSP's network and the CCS vendors' ACDs and Internet solutions used for CRS. The NMS shall actively monitor the status of these entities. When a CRS call is placed to the NSP network

over a DDTP authorized 800 number, the NMS will monitor the status of the call from when it is received at the network, to the ACD it is delivered to, to the CA that answers it. Outbound calls made by the CA will also be monitored by the NMS and the NMS will associate all outbound calls with the inbound calls.

4.8.2. Management Reporting *[primarily phase 2]*

The NMS will regularly furnish a number of reports to the DDTP as stipulated elsewhere in this RFP. These reports will cover CRS performance and traffic history of the NSP and the CCS providers, as well as of the NMS provider. CRS calls shall be measured for all types of inbound and outbound calls except VRS and WCR (voice, TTY, HCO, VCO, ASCII, Spanish, STS, etc), call blocking, speed of answer, length of time in queue, conversation minutes, set-up time, etcetera.

4.8.3. CCS Call Routing *[phase 1]*

The NMS shall send routing information to the NS or to a DDTP approved CCS inbound carrier of choice whenever a call is placed over an 800 number associated with CRS. The routing information shall determine the CCS vendor to send the call to, and shall be based on parameters determined by the DDTP. Alternative routing instructions shall also be sent whenever parameter thresholds determined by the DDTP for adverse and catastrophic NS or CCS conditions occur.

4.8.4. 711 Database Services *[phase 1]*

The NMS will also develop and manage a database, called the "CRS 711 database" (or simply "711 database"), which will be used exclusively to provide the NS vendor with call routing instructions based on the caller's CCS vendor of choice and desired mode of relay (voice, TTY, HCO, VCO, STS, Spanish, etc.) The 711 database shall not be limited to routing of calls placed via 711, but may be used to route any CRS call to its assigned CCS provider's address for the relay mode of the caller. Data fields for the 711 database shall be telephone number, relay mode, CCS provider of choice, user name (optional), and password (only for IP based relay modes). Input of data to this database may be from a number of sources, including the CCS providers. Upon a caller's request, a CCS vendor shall be able to query the NMS's 711 databases to establish, confirm or change the caller's registered choice of CCS vendor. Customer preference (profile) data shall be the responsibility of the CCS vendors and not the NMS vendor.

4.8.5. Disaster Preparedness *[phase 1 and 2]*

The NMS provider shall have sufficient disaster recovery planning and systems so as to assure continued services in the event of a catastrophe. Loss of NMS service cannot prevent CRS calls from being delivered to the call center providers.

4.8.6 Site and System Access *[phase 2]*

The NMS vendor shall be required to provide real-time remote monitoring by the DDTP via the Internet or other media of NMS, NS and CCS CRS performance. In addition the NMS vendor shall provide the DDTP with site access for monitoring or inspection to assure compliance with all contract provisions.

4.8.7. Cooperation *[phase 1 and 2]*

The NMS vendor shall be required to cooperatively work with the other CRS component vendors and with the DDTP to successfully plan and implement services in a manner that will foster overall success of the CRS undertaking.

4.9. POSSIBLE FUTURE IMPACTS TO CRS

It is possible that the number and type of relay calls will change, both nationally and within California, as technology and regulations continue to develop. States that have implemented 711 have seen an increase in TRS traffic. The FCC has ordered all common carriers nationally to implement 711 for TRS access no later than October 1, 2001. The FCC has also ordered that appropriate publicity campaigns be carried out to educate the public about 711. The FCC was not specific as to the type or extent of such publicity/education and it may be that the CPUC shall become involved in determining such efforts within California. The FCC has also talked for some time about the possibility of mandating or funding national TRS outreach and education to the general public, and in June of 2001 the FCC approved a NECA budget with $5.45 million for national education and outreach through mainstream media for TRS, including 711 and STS. CRS CCS vendors will also have an opportunity to advertise CRS and to offer ancillary services of benefit to all Californians that might use CRS.

The FCC has been proactively developing rules concerning TRS and other functional communication equivalencies under the jurisdiction of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its impact upon the Communications Act. The FCC has recently approved IP-based relay and had previously approved reimbursement of all intrastate and interstate video relay calls in order to promote video relay

services (VRS.) It is not known how long the FCC will continue to authorize reimbursement to TRS providers for intrastate VRS calls, but it is significant that they are doing so. The immediate impact of these decisions on the CRS RFP is that CCS providers need not satisfy California's intended VRS and WCR performance and monitoring requirements to promote their services and to be reimbursed by NECA. Although VRS and WCR remain mandatory requirements of each awarded CCS vendor, to the degree that the VRS and WCR requirements of the RFP are more strict than that of the FCC, the more strict requirements shall be suspended until such time that the CCS Providers are reimbursed directly by the DDTP. (See RFP Sections 6.3.27.(4.) and 6.3.28.(2.).) Many people feel that VRS will become the dominant relay mode of choice as high quality desktop video and its required bandwidth become affordable. Not only are VRS call minutes reimbursed at a much higher rate, it is also likely that the amount of TRS traffic may significantly increase since VRS facilitates the use of the more natural and expressive language of ASL in lieu of typed TTY messaging.

The FCC also continues its ongoing solicitation of information and development of new rules for improving TRS, both in terms of quality of service, and in expansion or adoption of new or evolving technologies. (See www.fcc.gov/cgb/dro/trs.html.)

Similarly, other technologies such as web chat and wireless messaging (for example, see www.aspiro.com/templates/Page.asp@id=2206) have the potential to increase TRS use by both voice users and users with disabilities, both nationally as well as in California. The awardees of this RFP will be in the unique position to be able to develop and offer exciting new services and technologies to a potentially widening market.